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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

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PHYSICAL *life is not necessarily a vale of sorrow. The time must come when we shall have made man's life on earth what it ought to be, when we shall have no fear of anything, when we shall not be afraid of our fellowmen. It was said of Daniel, when he entered the lions' den, the beasts of prey did not touch him at all. Why? Because his heart was pure. He had no harm in it for anyone. He trusted to the spiritual law of his own being, and all nature makes obeisance to that. We could go out calmly, courageously, happily, relying on the laws of our own natures. If we did so, we would bring our daily lives in line with that nature; for there is nothing of our action which does not come from the mind, and back of the mind is the* MOTIVE *we have in acting.*

—R. C.

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A U M

That all-pervading spirit, that spirit which gives light to the visible sun, even the same *in kind* am I, *though infinitely distant in degree.* —*The Yajur Veda*

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXIX **October, 1951** **No. 12**

THE DIVINITY OF "OTHER" MEN

THE confusions and bewilderments of this age are many, but of all the contradictions that haunt alike the student, the inquirer, and the man of good will, the mysterious inconsistencies in human behavior are surely the greatest of all. It is from these that arise the distrusts and suspicions which keep the nations poised on the brink of war. It is these which lead men to intolerant condemnations of one another; and it is these which cause others to give themselves over to despair of any practical brotherhood of man—the obstacles seem too great to overcome.

War, of which the world has seen much in recent years, is always a fertile source for such contradictions. Side by side with acts of heroism and sacrifice are ranged unspeakable barbarisms and cruelties. These contrasts are evident in the ranks of fighting men, regardless of "side," and they appear in another form at the level of international diplomacy. Statesmen speak in hallowed accents of their love of peace, at the same time declaring policies which are sure to make the likelihood of peace far more remote than before. Men who advocate peace without partisanship are quickly called "traitors" or "subversives," while others have only to add some choice religious sentiment to their proposals of aggression to win the enthusiastic support of millions.

The psychic phenomena of everyday life are much the same. Friends turn upon friends, speaking ill of them and watching for opportunity for self-justification. Men move from one party to another, apparently without any rational basis for a change of side or of convictions. Their memories seem short indeed, their principles imitate the chameleon—and yet, their personal attitudes exhibit

no recognition of betrayal or double-dealing. It is the bystanders and their former associates who are bewildered—not they.

Nor is it exclusively the "other people" who are guilty of these oscillations. Anyone whose psychic nature is not under perfect control—and this includes nearly everyone—is in some measure subject to alternations of psychic polarity. In the *Yoga Aphorisms,* Patanjali says that the soul, at other times than that of concentration, "is in the same form as the modification of the mind"; and this, Mr. Judge explains in his commentary, means that—

> when the internal organ, the mind, is through the senses affected or modified by the form of some object, the soul also—viewing the object through its organ, the mind—is, as it were, altered into that form; as a marble statue of snowy whiteness, if seen under a crimson light will seem to the beholder crimson and so is, to the visual organs, so long as that colored light shines upon it.

It seems characteristic of the psychic nature, or of the mind in conjunction with the psychic nature, that it has no polarity of its own, but is continually being "modified" by the states of feeling to which all ordinary humans are subject. In consequence, those in whom both desire and will are weak give the impression of unending vacillation—of being whirled hither and yon from one point of view or outlook to another. The issue, here, is not so much one of "honesty," or "sincerity," but of lack of egoic individuality. Truly, while under the sway of psychic impulse, the individual has only *reflected* self-consciousness. He is rather a lunar being than a human being, and his actions and thoughts, while seeming to be responsible, are no more than psychic reflexes.

Practically all the contradictions in human behavior grow out of this complex relationship between the psychic nature and the higher manasic or spiritual man. The psychic consciousness retains the entire *vocabulary* of spiritual perception—vision and discrimination on the basis of principle—but, when in the grip of some overpowering feeling, can use that vocabulary only for partisan or personal purposes. Hence it is said that "the devil can quote scripture for his purposes," that men "rationalize" what they want to do, making it seem to be what they *ought* to do.

Illustrations of these psychic transactions are legion. For example, one who has suffered intense humiliation will almost always be unable to see any good in the actions of the person regarded as the

source of the humiliation. The pain of shame creates a kind of induced state of concentration, through which the offending one becomes a thing of evil; but let the humiliation be revealed as only a fancy, and almost immediately, the offender is offender no longer, and it may be said that he has "changed." Change, indeed, has taken place, but *in* the one who thought himself humiliated.

Then there is the enthusiast who passes from one fad to another, supporting each with wholehearted earnestness during the cycle of its dominance in his life. The "sincerity" of the enthusiast is beyond question. His friends may wonder what has happened to last year's panacea, nostrum or cure, now that a new one has appeared, but this is no problem for the enthusiast. *He* sees his own feelings—these, always, are the real. When a feeling has died out in one direction, the idea with which it was once associated no longer has reality or importance, and as his sincerity and integrity grew out of his feeling, he knows that he is being true to that. He cannot understand that charge of inconsistency or inconstancy—he doesn't *feel* inconsistent; possessed by the new enthusiasm, he can hardly remember the old.

In the case of the man who is animated by one, great, all-consuming desire, the situation is different. This is the sort of desire which Mr. Judge speaks of as often being mistaken for "will." Great military conquerors, perhaps—men who have risen to great wealth, and overbearing egotists of every description—fall into this category. Here the desire has assumed a rigid form, giving the mind a single coloration, with the result that the individual hardens by the forcible passion for personal stature. Such men easily rise to high eminence during Kali Yuga, for they represent in themselves the dream of "success" that is cherished by the psychic hungers of the great multitude of men. But this sort of individuality is psychic, also, gaining its integrity from the intensity of desire rather than from the soul-perceptions of the higher ego.

In all these currents of psychic life, the force of karmic inheritance is supreme. Mr. Judge describes them in a paragraph in *The Ocean:*

> In *Manas* the thoughts of all lives are stored. That is to say: in any one life, the sum total of thoughts underlying all the acts of the life-term will be of one character in general, but may be placed in one or more classes. That is, the business man of today is a single type; his entire life thoughts represent but one single thread of thought. The artist is another. The man who has engaged in

> business, but also thought much upon fame and power which he never attained, is still another. The great mass of self-sacrificing, courageous, and strong poor people who have but little time to think, constitute another distinct class. In all these the total quantity of life thoughts makes up the stream or thread of a life's meditation—"that upon which the heart was set"—and is stored in *Manas,* to be brought out again at any time in whatever life the brain and bodily environments are similar to those used in engendering that class of thoughts.

This is the field, the market-place, the arena, of man's moral existence and struggle. The virtues which we admire and require of our fellows must have their play through whatever channels of human perception are available. All too often, they emerge to enforce and justify merely psychic allegiances. When honestly expressed, these virtues shape the various partisanships which turn good men into enemies of one another. When dishonestly expressed, they create the forms of hypocrisy typical of the age, giving rise to all the tired cynicisms which sophisticated members of society offer to the world as "humor" and worldly wisdom.

There is a further aspect of this broad problem, discussed by Mr. Judge in his *Path* series, "Conversations on Occultism." It has to do with the influence exercised on entire populations by their own karmic past. This portion of the dialogue runs:

> *Student.*—Has the age in which one lives any effect on the student; and what is it?
>
> *Sage.*—It has effect on every one, but the student after passing along in his development feels the effect more than the ordinary man. Were it otherwise, the sincere and aspiring students all over the world would advance at once to those heights towards which they strive. It takes a very strong soul to hold back the age's heavy hand, and it is all the more difficult because that influence, being a part of the student's larger life, is not so well understood by him. It operates in the same way as a structural defect in a vessel. All the inner as well as the outer fibre of the man is the result of the long centuries of earthly lives lived here by his ancestors. These sow seeds of thought and physical tendencies in a way that you cannot comprehend. All those tendencies affect him. Many powers once possessed are hidden so deep as to be unseen, and he struggles against obstacles constructed ages ago. Further yet are the peculiar alternations brought about in the astral world. It, being at once a photographic plate, so to say, and also a reflector, has become the keeper of the mistakes of ages past which it continually reflects upon

us from a plane to which most of us are strangers. In that sense, therefore, free as we suppose ourselves, we are walking about completely hypnotized by the past, acting blindly under the suggestions thus cast upon us.

Student.—Was that why Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do*"?

Sage.—That was one meaning. In one aspect they acted blindly, impelled by the age, thinking they were right.

With these complex and overshadowing destinies, these strange twistings and windings in the skein of human attitudes and actions, it becomes evident that mere "tolerance" of our fellows is far from being enough. Rather the need is for knowledge—for recognition that, much of the time, human beings are acting as only half-men, or quarter-men, and that even we ourselves, in moments of anger, jealousy, or injured pride, give way to feelings which may transform the entire universe of perception into a dark, bitter place with evil in every corner while the best of men seem ill-intentioned and corrupt.

It is evident, too, when we reflect upon it, that beings no less, essentially, than gods, could be called upon to work their way through this labyrinth of human nature—this composite maze of psychic, intellectual and moral pathways—to find the pure, impersonal light of truth. Our capacity to see ourselves—this, surely, is our only salvation, and the salvation of all others. We shall not grow into the larger life merely through righteousness—least of all through self-righteousness—but only through having hearts that are big enough to contain all men, the weak and oscillating ones, the strong and angry ones, as well as the wise.

The hunger to know, to understand, to turn back mystery after mystery—this must be the only way that our hearts can grow, for as the opacities and blind spots are gradually worn away, we come to see a little more the divinity which thrills through other men, men who now seem so unlike ourselves. And we, after all, cannot make others like ourselves; and we would not, had we the courage to admit all our own imperfections. The secret of life, for human beings, must rest in that trust in the innate perfectibility of *other* men, to be gained according to *their* way, not ours. And perhaps, if our way is followed devotedly, without peering about, without suspicion and without pride, our way will shed its own peculiar light to help all the others along the ways that they must go.

FROM "THE OCCULT WORLD"

IV

OF your several questions [the Master writes] we will first discuss, if you please, the one relating to the presumed failure of the 'Fraternity' to 'leave any mark upon the history of the world.' They ought, you think, to have been able, with their extraordinary advantages, to have 'gathered into their schools a considerable portion of the more enlightened minds of every race.' How do you know they have made no such mark? Are you acquainted with their efforts, successes, and failures? Have you any dock upon which to arraign them? How could your world collect proofs of the doings of men who have sedulously kept closed every possible door of approach by which the inquisitive could spy upon them? The prime condition of their success was that they should never be supervised or obstructed. What they have done they know; all that those outside their circle could perceive was results, the causes of which were masked from view. To account for these results, men have, in different ages, invented theories of the interposition of gods, special providences, fates, the benign or hostile influences of the stars. There never was a time, within or before the so-called historical period, when our predecessors were not moulding events and 'making history,' the facts of which were subsequently and invariably distorted by historians to suit contemporary prejudices. Are you quite sure that the visible heroic figures in the successive dramas were not often but their puppets? We never pretended to be able to draw nations in the mass to this or that crisis in spite of the general drift of the world's cosmic relations. The cycles must run their rounds. Periods of mental and moral light and darkness succeed each other as day does night. The major and minor yugas must be accomplished according to the established order of things. And we, borne along on the mighty tide, can only modify and direct some of its minor currents. If we had the powers of the imaginary Personal God, and the universal and immutable laws were but toys to play with, then, indeed,

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NOTE.—This installment in the series reprinted from A. P. Sinnett's first theosophical book, concludes the Master's letter—addressed to A. O. Hume, Sinnett's T. S. associate—which began in the September issue. This Mahatma letter, in especial, is repeatedly drawn upon by Wm. Q. Judge in his writings, *The Ocean of Theosophy* making use of the opening passage (above) in its first chapter.—Eds. THEOSOPHY.

might we have created conditions that would have turned this earth into an arcadia for lofty souls. But having to deal with an immutable law, being ourselves its creatures, we have had to do what we could, and rest thankful.

"There have been times when 'a considerable portion of enlightened minds' were taught in our schools. Such times there were in India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. But, as I remarked in a letter to Mr. Sinnett, the adept is the efflorescence of his age, and comparatively few ever appear in a single century. Earth is the battle-ground of moral no less than of physical forces, and the boisterousness of animal passion, under the stimulus of the rude energies of the lower group of etheric agents, always tends to quench spirituality. What else could one expect of men so nearly related to the lower kingdom from which they evolved? True, also, our numbers are just now diminishing, but this is because, as I have said, we are of the human race, subject to its cyclic impulse, and powerless to turn that back upon itself. Can you turn the Gunga of the Brahmaputra back to its source; can you even dam it so that its piled-up waters will not overflow the banks? No; but you may draw the stream partly into canals, and utilize its hydraulic power for the good of mankind. So we, who cannot stop the world from going in its destined direction, are yet able to divert some part of its energy into useful channels. Think of us as demi-gods, and my explanation will not satisfy you; view us as simple men—perhaps a little wiser as the result of special study—and it ought to answer your objection.

" 'What good,' you say, 'is to be attained for my fellows and myself (the two are inseparable) by these occult sciences?' When the natives see that an interest is taken by the English, and even by some high officials in India, in their ancestral science and philosophies, they will themselves take openly to their study. And when they come to realize that the old 'divine' phenomena were not miracles, but scientific effects, superstition will abate. Thus, the greatest evil that now oppresses and retards the revival of Indian civilization will in time disappear. The present tendency of education is to make them materialistic and root out spirituality. With a proper understanding of what their ancestors meant by their writings and teachings, education would become a blessing, whereas now it is often a curse. At present the non-educated, as much as the learned natives, regard the

English as too prejudiced, because of their Christian religion and modern science, to care to understand them or their traditions. They mutually hate and mistrust each other. This changed attitude towards the older philosophy, would influence the native princes and wealthy men to endow normal schools for the education of the pundits; and old MSS., hitherto buried out of reach of the Europeans, would again come to light, and with them the key to much of that which was hidden for ages from the popular understanding, for which your skeptical Sanscritists do not care, which your religious missionaries do not *dare,* to understand. Science would gain much, humanity everything. Under the stimulus of the Anglo-Indian Theosophical Society, we might in time see another golden age of Sanscrit literature. . . . .

"If we look at Ceylon we shall see the most scholarly priests combining, under the lead of the Theosophical Society, in a new exegesis of Buddhistic philosophy; and at Galle, on the 15th of September, a secular Theosophical School for the teaching of the Singhalese youth opened with an attendance of over three hundred scholars; an example to be imitated at three other points in that island. If the Theosophical Society, 'as at present constituted,' has indeed no 'real vitality,' and yet in its modest way has done so much practical good, how much greater results might not be anticipated from a body organized upon the better plan you could suggest?

"The same causes that are materializing the Hindu mind are equally affecting all Western thought. Education enthrones skepticism, but imprisons spirituality. You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies. Give this, and you will confer happiness of mind on thousands. The era of blind faith is gone; that of inquiry is here. Inquiry that only unmasks error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts. Iconoclasm, from its very destructiveness, can give nothing; it can only raze. But man cannot rest satisfied with bare negation. Agnosticism is but a temporary halt. This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans.

"He who observes what is going on to-day, on the one hand among the Catholics, who are breeding miracles as fast as the white ants do their young, on the other among the free-thinkers, who are converting, by masses, into Agnostics—will see the drift of things. The age is revelling at a debauch of phenomena. The same marvels that the spiritualists quote in opposition to the dogmas of eternal perdition and atonement, the Catholics swarm to witness as proof of their faith in miracles. The skeptics make game of both. All are blind and there is no one to lead them. You and your colleagues may help to furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy—one impregnable to scientific assault, because itself the finality of absolute science; and a religion that is indeed worthy of the name, since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a slight sacrifice? And if, after reflection, you should decide to enter this new career, let it be known that your society is no miracle-mongering or banqueting club, nor specially given to the study of phenomenalism. Its chief aim is to extirpate current superstitions and skepticism, and from long-sealed ancient fountains to draw the proof that man may shape his own future destiny, and know for a certainty that he can live hereafter, if he only wills, and that all 'phenomena' are but manifestations of natural law, to try to comprehend which is the duty of every intelligent being."

"Our Senses Mislead Us . . ."

We see the sun rise above the horizon; it is beneath us. We touch what we think is a solid body; there is no such thing. We hear harmonious sounds; but the air has only brought us silently undulations that are silent themselves. We admire the effects of light and of colours that bring vividly before our eyes the splendid scenes of Nature; but, in fact, there is no light, there are no colours. It is the movement of opaque ether striking on our optic nerve which gives us the impression of light and colour. We burn our foot in the fire: it is not the foot that pains us; it is in our brain only that the feeling of being burned resides. We speak of heat and cold; there is neither heat nor cold in the universe, only motion. Thus, our senses mislead us as to the reality of objects around us. —Flammarion

CHOOSING BOOKS

> Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
>
> —Paul's Message to the Philippians

> Inquirers ought to read the *Bhagavad-Gita.* It will give them food for centuries if they read with spiritual eyes at all. Underneath its shell is the living spirit that will light us all. I read it ten times before I saw things that I did not see at first. In the night the ideas contained in it are digested and returned partly next day to the mind. It is the study of adepts.
>
> —W. Q. Judge

READING a book is far more than merely scanning a page with one's eyes. It can mean a powerful experience. Æ (George Russell) said of the *Bhagavad-Gita* that it changed the course of his life. How many books are capable of making this sudden evolutionary transmutation, awakening the intuition like a lightning flash from one's Higher Ego? For the hour or more of actual reading we put aside our own thoughts and absorb those of the author—for better or worse. His influence afterward fades gradually from our mind, according to the power of the impression.

Precisely what happens to the reader who offers himself to any book? Unless a book is selected with discrimination, written by a man of knowledge, and read with active conscience, its effect on the reader will be dubious. If we wish to train ourselves for constructive, altruistic purposes, we will not submit ourselves to such an influence, whether it is in literature, radio, films, or "tv."

Communion with great Teachers through their books is like the uplift received from conversing with a sage. Their wisdom permeates our natures and acts as a catalyst in our minds.

> There is no help like association with those who think as we do, or like the reading of good books. The best advice I ever saw was to read holy books, or whatever books tend to elevate yourself, as you have found by experience. There must be some. Once I found some abstruse theological writings of Plotinus to have that effect on me—very ennobling, and also an explanation of the wanderings of Ulysses. Then there is the *Gita.* All these *are*

> *instinct with a life of their own* which changes the vibrations. Vibration is the key to it all. —Wm. Q. Judge

What, then, is a fair test for a man or a book? One would be to ask ourselves: Would we want our best friend to meet this individual or to read this book? Does it enlarge my mental horizon? Does it expand my sympathies? Even one who is careful to submit his attention only to worthy literature and influences, cannot but be affected in some degree by the degradation so prevalent in a dark age. The very fact of influence through reading, listening to radio, speakers, watching movies and television has its hazards, for each of these mediums of communication may foster passivity, weakening the creative fiber and independent judgment as well as intuition. Let us read less but let what we read serve a worthy purpose. Are our minds so bone-dry that, sponge-like, they will absorb *any* liquid indiscriminately? More than daily food determines bodily strength, health and beauty, mental fare governs the quality of thought, and therefore, of motive and action.

The pioneer textbook writer, Noah Webster, gave the following excellent advice on reading: "Let it then be the first study of your early years to learn in what consists *real worth* or *dignity of character.*" His philosophy as an author is equally sound: "The basis of all excellence in writing and conversation is truth—truth is intellectual gold, which is as durable as it is splendid and valuable."

Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of my Experiments with Truth,* traces the effect of various books upon his mind and life. His father was uneducated, and the boy until his teens had a distaste for reading. Yet Gandhi speaks of two plays which captured his attention in childhood by their moral power. The first was a play about a son's devotion to his parents, and the second was *Harishchandra.* After seeing this play, Gandhi relates—

> "Why should not all be truthful like Harishchandra?" was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Harishchandra went through was the one ideal it inspired in me.

At the age of thirteen, Gandhi learned to love the Ramayana, with the help of an expert reader who chanted the couplets and quatrains to him, and explained them. This laid the foundation of Gandhi's deep devotion to that scripture. As he says, "Impressions formed

at that age strike roots deep into one's nature, and it is my perpetual regret that I was not fortunate enough to hear more good books of this kind read during that period." It was not until Gandhi left his native land that he was awakened to his Indian philosophical heritage. While a student in England, he came across two theosophists (probably the Keightleys—Archibald and Bertram—who were nephew and uncle, not brothers, as he refers to them). His account illustrates the cumulative effect of great books:

> They talked to me about the *Gita* [he writes]. They were reading Sir Edwin Arnold's translation—The Song Celestial—and they invited me to read the original with them. I felt ashamed, as I had read the divine poem neither in Sanskrit nor in Gujarati. I was constrained to tell them that I had not read the *Gita,* but that I would gladly read it with them and that though my knowledge of Sanskrit was meagre, still I hoped to be able to understand the original to the extent of telling where the translation failed to bring out the meaning. I began reading the *Gita* with them. The verses in the second chapter
>
> If one
> Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs
> Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
> Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
> Recklessness; then the memory—all betrayed—
> Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,
> Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone.
>
> made a deep impression on my mind, and they still ring in my ears. The book struck me as one of priceless worth. The impression has ever since been growing on me with the result that today I regard it as the book par excellence for the knowledge of the Truth. It has afforded me invaluable help in my moments of gloom. I have read almost all the English translations of it, and I regard Sir Edwin Arnold's as the best. He has been faithful to the text, and yet it does not read like a translation. Though I read the *Gita* with these friends, I cannot pretend to have studied it then. It was only after some years that it became a book of daily reading.
>
> The brothers also recommended *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold, whom I knew till then as the author only of *The Song Celestial,* and I read it with even greater interest than I did the *Bhagavadgita.* Once I had begun it I could not leave off. They also took me on one occasion to the Blavatsky Lodge and introduced me to Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant. The latter had just joined the Theosophical Society, and I was following with great interest

> the controversy about her conversion. The friends advised me to join the Society, but I politely declined saying, 'With my meagre knowledge of my own religion I do not want to belong to any religious body.' I recall having read, at the brothers' insistence, Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy.* This book stimulated in me the desire to read books on Hinduism, and disabused me of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition.

About this time he tried to read the Bible on the advice of a Christian friend. He found the Old Testament difficult and uninteresting. "But the New Testament produced a different impression, especially the Sermon on the Mount which went straight to my heart. . . . My young mind tried to unify the teaching of the *Gita,* the *Light of Asia* and the Sermon on the Mount. That renunciation was the highest form of religion appealed to me greatly."

While he was a junior barrister, both Christians and Mussulmans endeavored to convert Gandhi. Though they failed, he expressed gratitude for the religious quest awakened by the reading they urged upon him. "Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is within You* overwhelmed me. It left an abiding impression on me." He wrote that other Christian books seemed to pale into insignificance "before the independent thinking, profound morality, and the truthfulness of this book. . . ." The young Gandhi found himself entirely absorbed in the service of the community and his fellow Indians in South Africa. "I had made the religion of service my own," and since religion was to him inseparable from service to his fellow men, he continued his studies.

As he gained more knowledge of the different religions, he relates that "The study stimulated my self-introspection and fostered in me the habit of putting into practice whatever appealed to me in my studies. . . . I began to realize more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love." The influence of Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" upon the evolution of Gandhi's non-violent resistance program is well known. Gandhi next describes the dynamic effect of Ruskin's *Unto This Last,* naming it "the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life:"

> I translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all). I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why

it so captured me and made me transform my life. A poet is one who can call forth the good latent in the human breast. Poets do not influence all alike, for everyone is not evolved in an equal measure.

The teachings of *Unto This Last* I understood to be:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

3. That a life of labor, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

The first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to me. *Unto This Last* made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first. I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice.

Choosing books, is, then, but one half of the process: in another, and deeper sense, books "choose" readers, by appealing to sentiments and convictions lying dormant or latent in the awakening mind. There are readers who simply follow their affinities, while others weigh and consider their impulsive attractions. The one perpetuates the same line of life's meditation year after year, and even, it may be, incarnation after incarnation. The active reader, the man who reads to discover how he may weld "purpose, mind, and man" into an integrated whole—seeks authors who will show him how to change his mind; how to extend his purposes; and how to exercise, not "his" will, but *Will* in bringing truer principles into daily practice.

THE YOGI AND THE MEDIUM

A European witness, after carefully comparing the results of [Raja] Yoga with those of the hypnotic or dreamy states artificially producible by us, says: "It makes of its true disciples good, healthy, and happy men. . . . Through the mastery which the yogi attains over his thoughts and his body, he grows into a 'character.' By the subjection of his impulses and propensities to his will, and the fixing of the latter upon the ideal of goodness, he becomes a 'personality' hard to influence by others, and thus almost the opposite of what we usually imagine a 'medium' so-called, or 'psychic subject' to be."

—KARL KELLNER

MAN AND HIS CIVILIZATION

IN one of Aesop's fables a lion remarks to the man that there are many statues of men slaying lions—but if only lions were sculptors there might be quite a different set of statues! The moral is a useful one when attempting an assessment of achievements in Time and Space, and from a particular point of view. Each generation of our humanity is apt to despise the past ("yesterday's news"), and blindly to disregard the future, now in the making. The sense of periodicity has been almost extinguished in the rush and fever of present demands. Familiarity with superficial views of evolution has bred contempt of its causative factors and their chronology. In this respect, most of us intellectually are still at the stage of the schoolboy who, since the later years of the nineteenth century, has invariably answered the question, "Are we better than our ancestors?" with the cheerful reply, "Yes, certainly, for they were ignorant of steamers, railway trains, and electric light" (and today would add "the atomic bomb"!).

Even if we be not guilty of confusing progress with mechanical invention for the satisfaction of primal desires, we are more than likely to be reproved for holding antique notions of causal connections between phenomena, and be given to understand that the work of the last two decades in mathematical physics demonstrates that "scientific investigation is the attempt to correlate phenomena in such a way that one event can be interpreted in terms of and with reference to others and its future predicted in terms of probability" (*The University and the Modern World,* by Arnold S. Nash, M.Sc. M.A. 1945). And yet, without the substitution of intelligent for mechanical factors of causation in the evolutionary process, it is not possible to conceive of any understandable correlation of phenomena or forces. There is the high authority of the *Zohar* (from the MSS of Agrippa von Nettessheim, 1485/1535) for the statement that the wisdom of the Kabala rests in the science of Equilibrium and Harmony, and that forces that manifest without having first been equilibrized (differentiated) perish in Space (*S.D.* II, 487). Some glimpse at least of the physical aspect of this truth must have entered the brain of even such an arch-rationalist as Sir Arthur Keith, when he

wrote in his *Essays on Human Evolution* (1946): "To ask me to believe that the evolution of man has been determined by a series of chance events is to invite me to give credit to what is biologically unbelievable."

What bearing has this upon the subject of man in relation to civilization? "Every set of ideals, moral or political," says W. T. Stace, "is an outgrowth of some theory—whether explicitly set forth or unconsciously assumed—about the nature of man" (*The Destiny of Western Man,* 1942). All civilizations have been or are expressions, in their main features, of a predominant mode of thinking—more often than not a very human version (or perversion) of an initial divine impulse. "We can be provincial in time as well as in space," writes Arnold S. Nash, and, regarding modern civilization as being modelled on the natural sciences and their *modus* of thought, he adds, "a later generation will view our superstitious regard for science with the same superior tolerance which we in our day condescend to offer to our intellectual ancestors." All the worst characteristics of scientific infallibility, no less than of theological dogmatism, were clearly foreseen in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The "union of passionate interest in the detailed facts with equal devotion to abstract generalization," which Professor A. N. Whitehead sees as the most striking mark of the scientific outlook, may have been true of the renaissance of experimental science in the sixteenth century. It is certainly not the whole truth, so far as the scientific temper of last century and this is concerned. Both *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) placed the pretensions of science to infallibility in the same bundle as those of the Roman Catholic Church:

> When the Pope can go to the extreme of fulminating anathemas against all who maintain the liberty of the Press and of speech, or who insist that in the conflict of laws, civil and ecclesiastical, the civil law should prevail, or that any method of instruction solely secular, may be approved (Encyclical of 1864); and Mr. Tyndall, as the mouth-piece of nineteenth century science, says, ". . . the impregnable position of science may be stated in a few words: we claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory"—the end is not difficult to foresee. (*Isis Unveiled,* I, Preface.)

Indeed not! Two world wars, and a suffering and bewildered humanity deposited upon the doorstep of the Atomic Age. Theosophy,

which came to save, was crucified, with its Messengers, by human selfishness and credulity.

It has been the cardinal "liberal" belief of modern civilization that man is but a self-naming animal, and that Nature (in the words of Sir Charles Sherrington, *Gifford Lectures,* 1939), "represents, in the case of man, a revulsion of the *product* against the process." If the aim of evolution be "to free reason from the domination of the instincts," as Fichte declared in 1805, then the ontological reference most favoured by "liberal" thinkers today would determine instincts as being evolutionary agents, and thus regard the dictum of the great German philosopher as equivalent to saying (as Sir Arthur Keith asserts) "that the aim of civilization is to free man from the domination of evolution"! We are even told of a dual code holding dominion over the behavior of the nations—the ethical (amity) and the cosmical (enmity)! So far do the obsessions of Darwinism push its devotees; and this tyranny of fanciful theorizing, at work equally in the brains of scientist and theologian, reflects the chaos that symbolizes the life of the age. In the religious field, attempts are being made continually, even by thinkers of a progressive turn of mind, to create a Christian *speculum mentis* as a substitute for the inevitable totalitarianism of Positivist and Nihilistic thought. The effort has been described by Arnold S. Nash as aiming at a fellowship of lay theologians or Christian scholars who would "create a Christian world view within which the conclusions of the specialized subjects of the university curriculum could be given their ultimate meaning in terms of a specifically Christian philosophy of man and of his relation to the historical process." This is but playing with undefined words, if it be not an escape from the uncongenial spectacle of a civilization based upon an interpretation of Christianity alien to the simple teachings of its Founder.

Whether we consider civilization in terms of contemporary religious or scientific thought, we are faced with the fundamental assumption of materialism, in its extension to the organized life of the community. The conception of brute matter, which, in a flux of configurations, follows a fixed routine imposed by external relations and not springing from the nature of its own being, is the natural basis of an economic interpretation of history, as of the human invention of a "God" (the effect of *Avidya* and *Maya*)—an acquired notion

supposed to be necessary for the purpose of designating the unknown cause of uncomprehended effects, and of imposing thought upon otherwise senseless matter. The nemesis of that dogmatism, which, in the names of Science and Religion, rejected with contumely the work of Those who sought "to show that Nature is not a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, and to assign to man his rightful place in the scheme of the Universe," has descended upon every phase of our civilized life. Those who seek, in the name of Universal Brotherhood, to formulate the bearing of occult philosophy upon the conduct of life, will be charged with attempting to systematize what are looked upon as nothing more than "the exclamatory indications of volitional attitudes"! There is little in the written speculations of men today that will lead the open-minded spectator to forsake the maxim of Paracelsus—*Experimenta et ratio auctorum loco mihi suffragantur* (Experiment and reason, rather than authors, are by me favoured). Dogmatic authority is most vehement when there are fewest realities to support its claims. For science and religion alike, the history of civilization is circumscribed by the respective theories and beliefs held by them as to the nature of man. Lacking a true philosophy in this respect, the accepted "authorities" argue *in vacuo.* On the other hand, the student of Theosophy does well to remember the words of Rabindranath Tagore (*The Home and the World,* 1919): "So long as we are impervious to truth and have to be moved by some hypnotic stimulus, we must know that we lack the capacity for self-government."

In his remarkable work *The Revolt of the Masses* (1932), Ortega y Gasset wrote:

> All previous civilizations have died through the insufficiency of their underlying principles. That of Europe is beginning to succumb for the opposite reason . . . today it is man who is the failure, because he is unable to keep pace with the progress of his own civilization.

Bertrand Russell, too, has seen the danger in this unequal progress of man and his world. "Science has made it inevitable," he writes (*Power: A New Social Analysis,* 1938), "that all must live or all must die," and he called attention to the perils inherent in the fact that, in a highly mechanized civilization, ambitious men might view human material as they have learnt to view their machines, as some-

thing unfeeling, governed by laws which the manipulator can use to his own advantage. There are, it is true, principles which cannot be so used, but they relate to the spiritual nature of man, and the consequences of their violation or disregard are retributive in effect. They are universal Unity and Causation, Human Solidarity, the Law of Karma, and Reincarnation. These constitute the bases of any truly civilized existence.

That the cyclic law of Race-evolution should be ignored by modern thought, in its more accepted phases, is but part of the heavy karma generated by our Monads in this Fifth Race. For they allowed the attributes of the *deva*-man of the Lemurian Race to be made, in Atlantean days, "the hand-maidens of the newly-awakened physiological and psychic passions of the physical man, instead of the reverse" (*S.D.* II, 302). One result of this disproportionate growth of the physical-intellectual nature is the deliberate limitation of the field of knowledge of human history "to a few thousand years, to less than a day in the whole age of Humanity, and to the present types of the actual continents and isles of our Fifth Race" (*S.D.* II, 444). No longer do the Schools speak of the Divine Dynasties which originated the first civilizations, and it is only necessary, as H. P. Blavatsky remarked, to mention the fact of "primeval civilization," for the frenzy of Darwinians to be excited! Nevertheless, as she pointed out, Egypt, at least, "runs counter to current hypotheses. There is no stone-age visible there, but a more glorious culture is apparent, the further back we are enabled to carry our retrospect" (*S.D.* II, 786 fn.).

"The Present is the child of the Past; the Future the begotten of the Present." It would be absurd to assume that there are no more fundamental changes for man, and that this present civilization, whose structure disintegrates, is his last hope. The Sixth Race will silently come into existence—

> so silently, indeed, that for long millenniums shall its pioneers—the peculiar children who will grow into peculiar men and women—be regarded as anomalous *lusus naturæ,* abnormal oddities physically and mentally. Then, as they increase, and their numbers become with every age greater, one day they will awake to find themselves in a majority. (*S.D.* II, 445.)

When that will be, who of us can say? But we know that Theosophy points the way to a new philosophy of life and civilization for

modern man, who may remember the prophetic words of that eminent scientist, Professor A. N. Whitehead: "For many generations the North American continent will be the living centre of human civilization. Thought and action will derive from it and refer to it."

"THE WORK OF A HUMAN BEING"

Be cheerful also, and seek not external help, nor the tranquility which others give. A man must stand erect, not be kept erect by others.

If nothing appears to be better than the deity which is planted in thee, which has subjected to itself all thy appetites and carefully examines all the impressions, and as Socrates said, has detached itself from the persuasions of sense and . . . cares for mankind—if thou findest everything else smaller and of less value, give place to nothing else.

How much trouble he avoids who does not work to see what his neighbour says or does or thinks, but only to [see] what he does himself, that it may be just and pure.

In the morning when thou risest unwillingly let this thought be present—I am rising to the work of a human being. Why then am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist, and for which I was brought into the world? Or am I made for this, to lie in the bed-clothes and keep myself warm?

I am composed of the formal and the material; and neither of them will perish into non-existence, as neither of them came into existence out of non-existence. . . .

Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind.

In one respect man is the nearest thing to me, so far as I must do good to men and endure them.

Reverence that which is best in the universe; . . . and in like manner reverence that which is best in thyself.

Let it make no difference to thee if thou art cold or warm if thou art doing thy duty, and whether thou art drowsy or satisfied with sleep.

—MARCUS AURELIUS

"FOUR FLAMES AND THREE FIRES"

THE science of occultism was never expressed in language similar to present-day scientific terminology. But anyone who studies the Mystery Language must eventually arrive at the conclusion that its modes of expression were, and are, scientific to the knowers of the ancient wisdom. Moreover, the deeper one penetrates into that wisdom through study, the more he becomes assured that the instrument necessary for research is his own being, and that, like a perfect scientific instrument, it must carry within itself the necessary guarantee. Furthermore, it must shine by its own light. This Self-illumination is as necessary to an understanding of the mystery language as it is necessary to carry a light in the dark, in order to find direction, and to be free of pitfalls. To stumble in occultism is a serious matter, because the instrument itself loses its light for a period commensurate to the seriousness of the misstep. The degree of Self-illumination will vary among individuals, but it must be a steady light; in this is found the guarantee. It can then be seen by those who need to see it; those who watch for breaks in the dark cloud of the race mind. From minute to minute, from hour to hour, from day to month and year, that eagerness for spiritual knowledge—which is light to the soul—must be carefully sustained.

The mystery language uses both symbol and allegory. Some of them, of profound significance, have spanned the ages to be with us to-day, and, although little of their original significance remains in the race mind, they act as guides to those who love the wisdom-religion. An allegory has the power to remain in the mind as a guide to thought; it is a logical basis for meditation, for "We must always seek for more than one meaning in every mystery allegory revealed, especially in those in which the number seven and its multiplication, seven by seven or forty-nine, appear." This plurality of meanings endows the allegory with universal appeal, and multiplies its usefulness. Sometimes it may be used as a catalyst to precipitate spiritual knowledge when the understanding needs clarifying. The less one struggles for a meaning, the more the inner light will reveal, for the intellect—subject to memory and associated ideas—will obscure the intuitive powers so necessary in occultism. It is better to carry

allegory and symbol into deep sleep, in which state the mind flees all the trappings of this world's thinking, and later, in waking hours, the knowledge sought will fall like dew upon the refreshed mind, following the pattern set.

No ordinary key can open all locks: each system calls for a special key. There are seven keys to all occult allegory and symbolism, and each interpretation must be related to the plane to which the key belongs. But for those who are fortunate enough to find it, there is a universal key. Its symbol is *fire*—higher divine knowledge. Fire is also a symbol of the One Life, depending upon the construction put upon the general symbolism. Should one meditate upon the relation between the three fires (the invisible immortal) and the four flames (the visible mortal), the desire for holiness would become like a seed from which the plant pushes up through fertile soil to spread its growth to the sun. When this growth is accomplished, the One Life will vibrate in seven rays throughout the being, like white light passing through a prism to reveal its seven colors.

Even an attempt to unite two fires and one flame in the bond of holiness will generate enough light for progress on the path, not only for oneself, but for fellow travelers as well. Basically the problem of self-control in man is situated in the desire nature, or Kama, serving manas in close harmony with Buddhi. The welding of these three is a goal attained by few indeed, but is nevertheless a goal to be striven for. The student who intelligently begins to work off old karma, thus removing obstructions within himself, becomes conscious of his principles as distinct one from the other—especially the three mentioned. In these three lie defeat or victory. Let them war with each other and defeat is imminent; at peace their power is great, for Buddhi is the principle through which mind, in its highest moments, contacts Spirit, while Kama, or desire, moves the will.

The fire symbolism enlarges its scope in the "forty-nine fires" of the *Secret Doctrine*. These refer to the seven aspects of spiritual energy on each of the seven planes of being, and also to the seven root races and seven sub-races, for the impact of the One Life upon the evolving man, both physical and spiritual, is closely related to his racial position. As the racial wheel slowly turns, he loses the use of certain fires, gaining the service of others. But at no time can he know them all unless he reaches perfection, when he is freed from

the ceaseless turning of the great wheel, and can choose his relative position to it.

The fifth is the true plane of allegory and symbol: *allegory* to help frame ideas, and *symbols* to control the elementals which give life and duration to thought. It is therefore necessary to comprehend with exactitude that with which we are dealing. How little has Christianity understood the import of its own symbol of the Lamb—complete harmlessness. This quality has been so desecrated and neglected, that man is now reaching the lowest depths of inhumanity. Seeing the fate of the ancient symbols, it is a wise man who gathers them like a sheaf of wheat, binding them together with spiritual knowledge. As long as Kama rules, there can be no true understanding of symbology, since it is the fifth plane, that of Manas, on which symbology and allegory assume their rightful relation to the self-conscious being. The seven fires of Manas seal or unseal the fate of man, locking or unlocking the gates at which he knocks; and because of mixed motivation—good, bad, and indifferent—an inner blindness leads him to attribute all his vicissitudes to good or bad fortune. When the true key to religious allegory and symbolism is lost, and dogmatic interpretations are followed, orthodoxy and sacerdotalism falsify the true worship, commercialize prayer, and make a display to stimulate devotion. Thus the religion of the senses replaces the religion of the spirit—*the four flames have enveloped the three fires.*

The Secret Doctrine names six Saktis, or great powers, which synthesize to form the seventh; and to further understand the extraordinary scope of these powers, one has but to read intuitively the aphorisms of Patanjali. What is most important to know is that each individual, consciously or unconsiously, is using these fires, or powers, to some degree in daily existence, for the seven reflect variously in each of the seven principles. The degree to which they can be consciously used is, of course, determined by the degree of self-conquest: "Ere thou canst near that goal, . . . thou must have mastered all the mental changes in thy Self, and slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and insidious, creep unasked within the Soul's bright shrine."

The incarnated ego may be likened to a musician improvising indifferently on seven notes, and their seven octaves. At last, music set down in divine symbols, he produces eternal harmonies.

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

ON *whom can we say that the responsibility rests for people who are misled or dominated by the strong character of another? No man could be a "leader" if there were not those to follow, but neither would there be followers if there were not those desirous of leading.*

This poses a very subtle question, and one that certainly cannot be answered all on one side or all on the other. Certainly, the "responsibility" must rest in varying degree on all concerned in any such situation. But it may be said that the apparent opposition of character between those who are weak to follow and those who are strong to lead is only illusory, resulting simply from qualities and tendencies of the personality. Actually, both those who follow *and* those who lead do so from a common spiritual or moral weakness. To act in a manner that deprives another man of his self-reliance and independence is a tacit admission on the part of the man so acting that he himself is not self-reliant and truly independent, but that he requires the adulation or dependence *of others* in order to complete his own existence. Such a man is as much a slave to his fellows—in an ultimate sense—as is the one who comes under his domination. That man is truly strong—a sage—who "gives light to all, but takes from none," as the *Voice of the Silence* has it.

Yet it is often said that strong characters cannot be held responsible for the passivity of those who are drawn to them. This is true to an extent, in that it seems a law of human nature which attracts the weak to the strong. But the hidden weakness of the strong is what exploits this natural human tendency to the point where it becomes an abnormal relinquishment of free will on the part of the weaker personality.

What is this "hidden weakness" of the strong? Must it not simply be the sin of Self, which is coiled around a man's motives, neutralizing the good intentions and encouraging the selfish ones? A man who is strong, and knows it, and takes pride in it, comparing himself to others weaker than he, thereby develops a weakness which preys on his fellows—a vampirish propensity which reduces still more what little strength they possess. The man who builds no monuments to

his strength, who has no need to be assured of it by the abasement of his fellows, who uses what power he has to buttress the strengths of others: such a man does not strain his strength to weakness through the sieve of self-love, but diverts it all into the channel of benefit to humanity. Such a man is no "leader," nor are those who are drawn to him and who work with him "followers," for there is nothing in him that panders to or plays upon their weakness. This is a union of strengths, and as such, turned to the common benefit of mankind, is an enduring and constructive thing. The other course mentioned is but an alliance of weaknesses, and can help neither "leaders" nor followers, but only contribute to the recession and confusion of all concerned.

The responsibility—where does it lie? It lies on all in degree of their knowledge, ability and motive, and this last—the motive—is indeed the crucial factor. Unless the motive is pure, a strength becomes a weakness, a virtue becomes a vice; but with the motive of altruism and self forgetfulness, the reverse is true, and weaknesses may become enlightening illustrations of the common problems of all humanity, which—when surmounted—constitute added strength for helping that same humanity.

Can something be said as to the validity of Shakespeare's injunction, "To thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man"? Just how certain a criterion of right action is this?

While generalization is often a happy inspiration for individual research, it is not a trustworthy guide, because half of its teaching is hidden from all but the penetrating thinker. A generalization always suggests some kind of short-cut to truth. Actually there is no short-cut, and the man who wants to find the truth of the matter must work back by himself from the generalization through an intermediate stage of uncomfortable but necessary uncertainty.

For example, look at the first part of the statement, *To thine own self be true.* Since this remark is not self-defining, a man may easily take it to mean that if he acts in accordance with what he *wants* to do, he cannot do real harm to anyone else. We can see that the crux is the question of what "self" we are to be true to—and most people have only a vague idea of self. The theosophist may see that the re-

ference is to the unchanging Higher Self, but what of the ordinary man who knows nothing of all the other selves within him, which he lumps together as "himself"? How is he to distinguish between the instinctual self, the passional self, the thinking self, the discriminating self, and the Self? Not knowing that all these are separate and often oppositional, he has only to be "true" to whatever self is momentarily dominating him. Following such a course, he will inevitably be false to many men, and false also to his real self.

It is said that in the case of a Mahatma, the highest exercise of the power of choice has become automatic—virtue is for him a habit. What can be the moral value of virtue which is not will-directed, nor consciously chosen as the preferred mode of action?

We think the answer to this question is held in the question itself, in terms of what appear unwarranted conclusions drawn from the original statement. How, for instance, can we say that any action of an Adept is not "will-directed," or "consciously chosen," when we know that the attainment of the state of adeptship is solely based on the development of a tremendously strong will turned in the right direction? And how are we to assert that the Adept does not consciously choose, when this would mean that he acts unconsciously, like a medium? H.P.B. repeated over and over again that mediumship is the polar opposite of Adeptship, so we must assume that not only some acts, but all acts of the Adept are "consciously chosen as the preferred mode of action."

As for the right exercise of the power of choice becoming "automatic," we think this a confusing word to use. So long as beings are in evolution, in manifestation, nothing which involves *choice* can be truly automatic. It may be (and it has been so stated) that by constant and unceasing right choice, the Adept becomes finally constitutionally incapable of making a wrong one. But this constitutional incapacity is dependent on the continued purity of motive and purpose. As anyone knows who has ever consciously formed a good habit, it is always *possible* to break it, or have it broken by "circumstances." With the Adept this possibility must be almost invisibly miniscule, yet we can imagine that the state of Adeptship itself requires a continual holding action of the will—the perfected man maintaining complete control of all his instruments and intentions.

IS HEREDITY A PUZZLE?

A WELL known writer in *Harper's Magazine* said lately, "Heredity is a Puzzle." He then proceeded, "The race is linked together in a curious tangle, so that it is almost impossible to fix the responsibility. * * * We try to study this problem in our asylums and prisons, and we get a great many interesting facts, but they are too conflicting to guide legislation. The difficulty is to relieve a person of responsibility for the sins of his ancestors, without relieving him of responsibility for his own sins."

This is the general view. Heredity is a puzzle, and will remain one so long as the laws of Karma and Reincarnation are not admitted and taken into account in all these investigations. Nearly all of these writers admit—excepting those who say they do not know—the theological view that each human being is a new creation, a new soul projected into life on this earth.

This is quite logical, inasmuch as they assert that we are only mortal and are not spirits. The religious investigators admit we are spirits, but go no further, except to assume the same special creation. Hence, when they come to the question of "Heredity," it is a very serious matter. It becomes a puzzle, especially to those who investigate heredity and who are trying to decide on whom responsibility ought to rest, while they know nothing of Karma or Reincarnation. And it is hinted at that there is necessity for legislation on the subject. That is to say, if we have a case of a murderer to consider, and we find that he has come of a race or family of murderers, the result of which is to make him a being who cannot prevent himself from committing murder, we have to conclude that, if this is due to "heredity," he cannot in any sane sense be responsible.

Take the case of the tribes, or family, or sect of Thugs in India, whose aim in life was to put people out of the world. Their children would of necessity inherit this tendency. It is something like a cat and a bird. It is the nature of the cat to eat the bird, and you cannot blame it. Thus we should be driven to pass a law making an exception in the case of such unfortunate persons. Then we should be met by the possibility of false testimony being adduced upon the trial of the criminal, going to show that he came under the law.

NOTE.—This article was first printed by Wm. Q. Judge in *The Path* for Nov., 1888.

This possibility is so great that it is not likely such a law will ever be passed. So that, even if the legal and scientific world were able to come to any conclusion establishing the great force of heredity, it would be barren of results unless the truth of Karma and Reincarnation were admitted. For in the absence of these, no law, and hence no remedy for the supposed injustice to be done to irresponsible criminals, could be applied. I am stating, not what I think ought to be done, but what will be the inevitable end of investigation into heredity without the aid of the other two great laws.

If these two doctrines should be accepted by the supposed legislators, it would follow that no such law as I have adverted to would ever be put on the books; for the reason that, once Karma and Reincarnation are admitted, the responsibility of each individual is made greater than before. Not only is he responsible even under his hereditary tendency, but in a wider sense he is also responsible for the great injury he does the State through the future effect of his life —that effect acting on those who are born as his descendants.

There is no very great puzzle in "Heredity" as a law, from the standpoint of Karma and Reincarnation, although of course the details of the working of it will be complicated and numerous.

I know that some theosophists have declared that it puzzles them, but that is because it is a new idea, very different from those instilled into us during our education as youths and our association with our fellows as adults.

None of the observed and admitted facts in respect to heredity should be ignored, nor need they be left out of sight by a Theosophist. We are bound to admit that leanings and peculiarities are transmitted from father to son, and to all along down the line of descent. In one case we may find a mental trait, in another a physical peculiarity; and in a great-grandson we shall see often the bodily habits of his remote ancestor reproduced.

The question is then asked, "How am I to be held responsible for such strange inclinations when I never knew this man from whom I inherit them?" As theories go at this day, it would be impossible to answer this question. For if I have come from the bosom of God as a new soul; or if what is called soul or intelligence is the product of this body I inhabit and which I had no hand in producing; or if I have come from far distant spheres unconnected with this earth,

to take up this body with whose generation I was not concerned; it would be the grossest injustice for me to be held responsible for what it may do. It seems to me that from the premises laid down there can be no escape from this conclusion, and unless our sociologists and political economists and legislators admit the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, they will have to pass laws to which I have referred. We shall then have a code which may be called, "Of limitations of responsibility of criminals in cases of murder and other crimes."

But the whole difficulty arises from the *inherited transmitted* habit in the Western mind of looking at effects and mistaking them for causes, and of considering the instruments or means, through and by means of which laws of nature work, as causes. Heredity has been looked at, or is beginning to be, as the cause of crime and of virtue. It is not a cause, but only the means or instrument for the production of the effect, the cause being hidden deeper. It seems just as erroneous to call heredity a cause of either good or bad acts as it is to call the merely mortal brain or body the cause of mind or soul.

Ages ago the Hindu sages admitted that the body did not produce the mind, but that there was what they called "the mind of the mind," or, as we might put it, "The intelligence operating above and behind the mere brain matter." And they enforced their argument by numerous illustrations; as, for instance, that the eye could not see even when in itself a perfect instrument, unless the mind behind it was acting. We can easily prove this from cases of sleepwalkers. They walk with their eyes wide open, so that the retina must, as usual, receive the impinging images, yet although you stand before their eyes they do not see you. It is because the intelligence is disjoined from the otherwise perfect optical instrument. Hence we admit that the body is not the cause of mind; the eyes are not the cause of sight; but that the body and the eye are instruments by means of which the cause operates.

Karma and Reincarnation include the premise that *the man* is a spiritual entity who is using the body for some purpose.

From remote times the sages state that he (this spiritual being) is using the body which he has acquired by Karma. Hence the responsibility cannot be placed upon the body, nor primarily upon

those who brought forth the body, but upon the *man himself.* This works perfect justice, for, while the man in any one body is suffering his just deserts, the other men (or souls) who produced such bodies are also compelled to make compensation in other bodies.

As the compensation is not made at any human and imperfect tribunal, but to nature itself, which includes every part of it, it consists in the restoration of the harmony or equilibrium which has been disturbed.

The necessity for recognizing the law from the standpoint of ethics arises from the fact that, until we are aware that such is the law, we will never begin to perform such acts and think such thoughts as will tend to bring about the required alterations in the astral light needed to start a new order of thoughts and influences. These new influences will not, of course, come to have full effect and sway on those who initiate them, but will operate on their descendants, and will also prepare a new future age in which those very persons who set up the new current shall participate. Hence it is not in any sense a barren, unrewarded thing, for we ourselves came back again in some other age to reap the fruit of the seed we had sown. The impulse must be set up, and we must be willing to wait for the result. The potter's wheel continues to revolve when the potter has withdrawn his foot, and so the present revolving wheel will turn for a while until the impulse is spent.

"TRUTH IS NOURISHMENT"

Intellectual and moral growth is no less indispensable than material improvement. Knowledge is a viaticum. Thought is a prime necessity; truth is nourishment, like wheat. A reasoning faculty, deprived of knowledge and wisdom, pines away. We should feel the same pity for minds that do not eat as for stomachs. If there be anything sadder than a body perishing for want of bread, it is a mind dying of hunger for lack of light.

All progress tends toward the solution. Some day, people will be amazed. As the human race ascends, the deepest layers will naturally emerge from the zone of distress. The effacement of wretchedness will be effected by a simple elevation of level.

We should do wrong to doubt this blessed solution.

—VICTOR HUGO

ON "NON-ATTACHMENT"

"Be true lovers, but of God, and not of each other. Love each the other in that to one another ye mirror God, for that God is in you each." —Wm. Q. Judge

IT is common experience that merely personal love and devotion never bring complete satisfaction. Only as one approaches the impersonal, in the true meaning of the term, can real happiness be attained. Treasures found and glories won translate themselves into joy when they are shared with others, but it is sharing, rather than things shared, which brings joy. Fulfillment of personal desire will not necessarily make one richer in Soul and Spirit. The less one binds himself with fetters of possessiveness, the freer he remains from pain, disappointment and loss. The desire to *own* things and *possess* other human beings upsets Nature's harmony and balance.

The principle of impersonality, or non-attachment, is little understood today. For most minds it implies a cold and heartless egotism, devoid of all elements of warmth and understanding. Several years ago, George Orwell, in an otherwise sympathetic article, criticized M. K. Gandhi for his teachings on non-attachment, quoting the Indian patriot as saying, "For the seeker after goodness there must be no close friendships and no exclusive loves whatever. Close friendships are dangerous, because 'friends react one on another' and through loyalty to a friend one can be led into wrong doing."

Mr. Orwell objects to this idea and calls it "inhuman." He says, "The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, that one *is* sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty, that one does not push asceticism to the point where it makes friendly intercourse impossible, and that one is prepared in the end to be defeated and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human individuals."

While Mr. Orwell here presents a truly *human* ideal, might it not be that he has a misconception of what non-attachment really means? Has he failed to understand the phrase, "close friendships," as used by Gandhi? May it not be that relationships of this kind demonstrate exactly the forms of personal attachment, or emotionalism, that must be overcome? Yet such "overcoming" can not mean that

one must renounce human warmth and understanding, nor sever the bonds of true loyalty, turning one's back upon the real needs of others. Genuine friendship will never betray—but *to be genuine,* friendship must be ennobling, and based upon something deeper than emotion. It must be rooted in the laws of Soul, and can not lower nor degrade, nor stoop to wrongdoing in order to "protect," as we suppose, a guilty fellow-man. Acts of loyalty can never require of one a further "sinfulness," but consist rather in efforts on the part of each to help the other avoid "sin." Loyalty will be seen in one's effort to enlighten his friend, and in one's power to incline his acts within the bounds of moral fitness.

Any relationship so "close" as to be exclusive of others is dangerous and can but lead to disharmony in the end. True friendship is therefore spiritual—impersonal—and can exist in its perfection only when non-attachment is complete. Gandhi, the great "friend of man," exemplified by his life and death his own ideal of friendship and loyalty.

It could not have been the aim of Gandhi to denounce divine virtue nor discourage those human relationships that are ennobling in every way; nor of Jesus, who said, "If ye love not your brother whom ye know, how can you love me whom ye do not know?" Yet, even personal devotion must have its purpose. Before the higher ideal is known, devotion to one in whom worthiness and virtue are recognized, is often the first step on the road to spiritual evolution. It is at least in right direction—away from self. The test of the purity of this devotion will be seen in its degree of unselfishness: does it express itself in service of others, or is it the seeking of favors in return for loyalty given? Does it include all in the situation one finds himself in, or is it qualified by favoritism which works to the detriment of all? In the one case, the relationship is impersonal, unattached, pure; in the other, selfish and unprincipled. The wise man appeals to those who "look into the principles of things" to make right use of friendship and personal devotion as a means toward the realization of Universal Brotherhood.

To live impersonally means to live as Soul. Some people are of the opinion that personal attachment and possession are necessary conditions of happiness, and that it is not possible to learn or enjoy impersonally. But is this really so? Is it not true that the unattached

experiencer is always keenest, wisest, and most unaffected by events? Is it not a fact that the impartial mind is far more capable of clear seeing than one that is bound and caught up in emotions? A person does not have to be partial nor "defeated and broken up by life" in order to enjoy the beauties of human existence. It is in the measure of one's freedom from attachment that the events of life become clear. As the bee gathers nectar and distills it into honey, leaving the blossom unharmed, so the unfettered heart may partake universally of the experience of all Souls.

The possessive attitude toward life always brings grief. Few men are content with the thought that the whole of Nature is theirs, or humble enough to concede the same gift to all others. The fragrance of the flowers, the music of the trees, the architecture of the hills, the majesty of the clouds—all these are man's for his joy and inspiration. But they are his in a universal sense—not personally. They are his to enjoy untouched, unmolested, undisturbed. So with all the gifts of human life—the less limited the personal perception of them, and the freer one may be permitted by karma to be from personal involvement, the greater will be his joy and contentment, and greater also his power to help. That help derives from Nature's all-inclusive beneficence.

Emerson held that the beauty and genius, the very soul and spirit, of the things we wish to possess, are inseparably bound up with the surroundings in which they exist:

> I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
> Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
> I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
> He sings the song, but it pleases not now,
> For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
> He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.

Through attachment to the part, one loses the Whole. Through the inordinate desire to possess—whether things or persons—through the tearing of the part from the Whole, the beauties and harmonies of life are destroyed. Through personal attachment and "exclusive love" one cuts himself off from a vast field of human experience. The Soul's wealth consists not in an abundance of things, nor in a paucity of wants, but in its own integrity. Freeing one's self from limited attachments, a man encompasses the Whole. Living as Soul,

he experiences universally, and feels a joy that is unknown but to the Sage.

> Remember this, that you own not one thing in this world. Your wife is but a gift, your children but loaned to you. All else you possess is given to you only while you use it wisely.—Wm. Q. Judge

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MORALITY—ANCIENT AND MODERN

The noble love of virtue, for virtue's own sake, of which some ancient Pagan nations were such prominent exemplars, has never blossomed in the Christian heart at large, nor have any of the numerous post-christian philosophies answered the needs of humanity, except in isolated instances. Hence, the moral condition of the civilized portions of mankind has never been *worse* than it is now—not even, we believe, during the period of Roman decadence. . . . we moderns have undeniably surpassed the ancients in one thing—namely, in the art of whitewashing our moral sepulchres; of strewing with fresh and blooming roses the outside walls of our dwellings, to hide the better the contents thereof, the dead men's bones and all uncleanness, and making them, "indeed, appear beautiful without." . . .

[Tolstoi writes] "Think what a perversity of ideas there must be, when the happiest, the freest condition of the human being, that of *(mental)* chastity, is looked upon as something miserable and ridiculous. The highest ideal, the most perfect condition to be attained by woman, that of a pure being, a vestal, a virgin, provokes in our society, fear and laughter." Tolstoi might have added—and when moral continence and chastity, mistaken for "monasticism," are pronounced far more evil than "the marriage system, *taken even* as the vile thing for which he [Tolstoi] gives it us." Has the virtuous critic [of Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*] never met with a woman, who, although the mother of a numerous family, had withal remained all her life mentally and morally a pure virgin, or with a *vestal* (in vulgar talk, a *spinster*) who although physically undefiled, yet surpassed in *mental,* unnatural depravity the lowest of the fallen women? If he has not—we have. Has it never occurred to any grave judge or critic either "that *immorality does not consist in physical acts alone but on the contrary, in liberating oneself from all moral obligations, which such acts impose*"?

—H.P.B. in *Lucifer,* July, 1890

THE ETERNAL VERITIES

III: Self As Seer

THE Soul is the Perceiver; is assuredly Vision itself, pure and simple; unmodified; and It looks *directly* upon Ideas."

Here we have the mysterious response which the Seers of all time have set themselves to repeat and record, as the only possible answer that can be made to the impossible prayer of ignorant mankind, blinded by its suffering and its sins: "Lord, that we may see without eyes, hear without ears, feel without pain, act without responsibility, and learn without understanding." H. P. Blavatsky expressed the same spiritual Reality, the same metaphysical Truth, the same physical Fact, in her *Key to Theosophy:* "To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle; for in the world mental as in the world spiritual each man must progress by his own efforts. The writer cannot do the reader's thinking for him, nor would the latter be any the better off if such vicarious thought were possible."

The whole Physical universe, visible and invisible, is but "world food"—food for sensation, in the lowest as in the highest being; the whole world of sensation is but food for the Metaphysical universe, whose forms are what we call Ideas, as we name the forms of the physical world, Bodies; the whole ideative world is but a Spectacle for the Soul, the Perceiver—for the Seer is Self-existent: when he ceases to look, for *him* "the manifested Universe has ceased to be," even though it has not ceased for those Souls still in the bonds of flesh, or imprisoned in intangible forms of thought. Does the Seer cease when he turns aside from the world of external and from the world of internal forms? "At the time of concentration, the Soul is in the state of a Spectator without a Spectacle."

What is that state? It is as if one engulfed in the world Babel of sensation, overwhelmed by his own Babel of mind, cried out without surcease, "What is silence?" More anyone—even a Sage—speaks of Silence, more it recedes; more one considers the discordant Ideas of Soul pictured in creeds, philosophies, and other systems of thought, the further he, from the Divine Image as reflecting all forms; more

one "meditates" on his own Soul as separate from all other Souls, more is he an exile from the World of Souls, the "Divine Form as including all Forms." "Meditation," today as ever, "is but a name to the bewildered." Pushed to its "perfection," *insanity,* it becomes "meditation with a seed"—and that seed is self, the Self of Egoism or Matter, the *Ahankara* of *Bhagavad-Gita.*

Every Founder of a religious sect, every self-deluded Savior of others, every self-appointed *Guru* or Priest, from him whom millions worship for long centuries, to the wandering "Ascetic" with his handful of reverent adorers who sincerely imagine the "Master" is "out of his body," when in sober fact he is merely "out of his head" —every such Idolater is lost to the possibility of *Spiritual* evolution. He has mistaken the Self that is seen for the Self that sees—and this is Egotism, both in Patanjali's definition, and in the common-sense of mankind. He has fallen into that "current of efflux"—the Law of Retardation—which in the end, if unchecked, will bear him back to the Source in complete unconsciousness of Soul; if he sees that current for what it is, the reverse of the current of progression, he will as surely land "on the shore" in full Consciousness—"the Spectator without a Spectacle," save such as he *wills.* The one is the apotheosis of self, as the other is identification with SELF. As says *The Voice of the Silence:* "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. The Self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no room for both."

The genuinely religious Soul and the sincerely materialistic Soul are on one and the same current, though faced in opposite directions. Each "goes by what he sees"—by what is seen, experienced—externally and internally. Each is convinced beyond recall that *what he sees* is the reality and finality. Yet he is Soul, though he knows it not, though in fact he is concentrated in Matter, not in Spirit; though he is convinced that "the non-eternal, the impure, the evil, and that which is not Soul, are, severally, eternal, pure, good, and Soul." He is veritably himself the "producer of this production" which he takes to be Reality because it is seen. What else can he do than regard himself as the creature of this creation, if he does not know himself as its Creator?

SELF is not personal; Law is not personal; action is not personal; nature is not personal; only human nature is personal. This is so

because only in mankind is the three-fold evolution, Spiritual, Intellectual, Physical, conjoined, albeit not yet *identified* as one and the same SELF in all. SELF is impersonal in every man, as in all Nature. Every "God" of every religion is a Personal god; every Priest of every sect is a Personal savior to his followers; every idea and ideal of the Materialist is a Personal power over the only Nature he knows or cares to know. The "Knowers of the SELF" are "Beneficent, Intelligent FORCES," whether in bodies or out of bodies, whether working in the world physical or the world mental. *They* "know" what Concentration is—for They *are* THAT, self-sought, self-found, self-perceived, self-realized.

"What is concentration?" It is Impersonality—"the *attitude of the Perceiver continuously maintained*" in no matter what form or world or relation. The Mahatmas are neither leaders nor followers, neither saviors nor saved, neither Gods nor men. They are, on earth, the Incarnation of Universal Brotherhood; they are Teachers to those who would learn the meaning of their mantram to all Disciples of Their Wisdom—the mantram which it was the supreme object of H. P. Blavatsky's life to set resounding in the lives of all Theosophists as *their* First Object: To form the nucleus of a universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color. "There is nothing but the SELF: the Self acts only through the creatures: *act* for and as the Self." Brotherhood *in actu* leads to brotherhood in thought; brotherhood of thought leads to brotherhood of Souls; brotherhood of Souls leads to Universal Brotherhood; Universal Brotherhood leads to the realization of the SELF. In Mr. Judge's "sacramental phrase":

> "Through the spreading of the idea of Universal Brotherhood,
> *the Truth in all things may be ascertained.*"

THE FACT-GRINDING BRAIN

My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive. . . . The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature. —CHARLES DARWIN

"THE GITA"—INFORMAL ESSAYS

On Everyday Questions

THE final chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* furnishes its own solid evidence for the fact that the entire dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna has a logical structure and balance. For Chapter Eighteen is a compact summary and digest of all the major lines of teaching occurring throughout the treatise, and this is done with sufficient exactitude to satisfy the requirements of even the most critical intellectual. And yet the story of the *Gita* ends, as it begins, with the problems of the average man. We could even say that for such the *Gita* is a discussion of those two great questions, "Why am I confused?" and "What is happiness?" The subtleties of the *Gita* are many for the very good reason that these are not questions capable of simple answers.

Arjuna's "despair," as portrayed in the opening scene of Chapter One, is the perplexity of a man who has evolved sufficiently to perceive that true happiness of soul cannot be gained without effort and self-discipline. Two different forms of "happiness," however, are desired at the same time. Krishna therefore instructs, by means of transcendental axioms and ringing affirmations, as to the permanence of the life of the soul in contrast with the impermanence of worldly pleasure and preferment. Then he suggests the rational groundwork for the *philosophy* of soul in the three fundamental propositions of Theosophy. Further, he notes the function of true religion in securing a stable base of symbolic reminders for the perceptions of the higher self. Finally, he turns the discourse to psychology, the science of *applied* philosophy. This is the reason, we may conclude, why the "three qualities" are a constant theme of the latter chapters.

In discussion of the three qualities, Krishna has removed the question of good and evil from the religious mood of Moral Categories. He shows Arjuna that every mortal possesses the elements of all three qualities—"good" and "evil" actions being the result of the dominance, or preponderance, of one or more of these qualities. Evil, in relation to a specific situation, is unbalanced action. Krishna is then ready to return once again to the "question of happiness," since there is no danger that Arjuna will confuse happiness of Soul with merely sensuous pleasure—as is so easily done by those with insufficient philosophical background:

> "Now hear what are the three kinds of pleasure wherein happiness comes from habitude and pain is ended. That which in the beginning is as poison and in the end as the water of life, and which arises from a purified understanding, is declared to be of the *sattva* quality. That arising from the connection of the senses with their objects which in the beginning is sweet as the waters of life but at the end like poison, is of the quality of *rajas*. That pleasure is of the dark *tamas* quality which both in the beginning and the end arising from sleep, idleness, and carelessness, tendeth both in the beginning and the end to stupefy the soul. There is no creature on earth nor among the hosts in heaven who is free from these three qualities which arise from nature."

The first portion of this section has unfortunately sometimes given rise to the mistaken notion that the only things truly good for us are the things we dislike intensely or find difficult. Carried to an extreme, this is the view of world renunciation upon which many of the false ascetics and flagellants of both East and West have built their creed. This is also the "anti-life" doctrine, referred to earlier in these commentaries. But in the context of the whole of the *Gita's* philosophy, one is able to see, when he reaches Chapter the Eighteenth, that Krishna refers only to the absolute necessity for discipline and self-control.

The beginning of every discipline is "poison" to the lower self. It means the re-channeling of energies habituated to moving, blindly, in some pleasurable pattern, following a line of least resistance. But Krishna does not say that all of these energies are to be dammed up, repressed and denied. He implies, instead, that *when new and more fruitful channels are developed by the disciplined man for the living forces of his psychic and mental nature, they will find a more meaningful and "happier" expression.* For Krishna, it is the one divine energy which finds but temporary embodiment in one or another of the three qualities. This energy is neither to be dissipated nor denied. It must be disciplined, and the "waters of life" are made pure and clear by discipline alone.

Because there is spiritual energy in all forms, there is pleasure to be gained from experiencing all the qualities, by *some* part of our natures—even from the quality of *tamas*. But the pleasure of the sleepy and the idle, we may see, is of little intensity. The questing aspirations of the higher self are, in such case, obscured, even though the being, stupefied, can half-heartedly experience happiness. This

practice, also, takes one ever downward; there is no *food* for soul. Thus men easily develop hopelessness which only a forcible change of their psychological ingredients can break. The more hopelessly tamasic are described thus piteously and astutely by a contemporary:

> "They were the ones who had never learned to want. For they were secretly afraid of being alive and the less they desired the closer they came to death. They had never been given one good reason for applying their strength. So now they disavowed their strength. . . ."

Those in whom the *rajas* quality predominates at least may be said to have seen that there can be no full worth and enjoyment in living without effort. The mistake of those who are primarily rajasic lies in the fact that rajas, untempered by sattva, so easily leads to a relaxing of effort soon after some immediate goal has been attained: at this point the shift is from rajas to the predominance of tamas.

Alternation between rajas and tamas is undoubtedly the prevailing pattern in a materialistic civilization, since the actions many are led to undertake have no goal beyond the realization of a particular object. There is little cultural encouragement for following the abstract ideal of perfection through endlessly continuing, more purposeful actions. And yet it is precisely this ideal which is necessary for development of an "unfettered mind." Only the unfettered mind can enter fully into experience, having no cloying attachment to preconceived ideas, nor to the results which the ordinary man is apt to alternately despair of or exult at thought of reaching.

Beyond all the qualities is the *principle* of discipline, the purposeful self-discipline which replenishes itself from its own strength—the strength of the Higher Self. Thus, if able to realize his natural heritage, "a man is fitted to be the Supreme Being." As Krishna says, such an one "enters into me without any intermediate condition." He has attained to clarity of discrimination in the midst of action. The cycle of partial striving, partial attainment, and disillusion, no longer holds sway. Each experience is assimilated in the Self and by the Self *at the time.* The after-death states no longer exist as witnesses to the man's inability or failure to complete such assimilation during earth-life.

It is not, then, in the final analysis, a question of Complete Perfection being the only source of "true happiness." As Krishna says, "all human acts are involved in faults, as the fire is wrapped in smoke."

What *is* needed, for the happiness and peace of mind Arjuna seeks, is simply that "unfettered mind and subdued heart" which always reveal enough of the long-range vision of the higher Self for the mind calmly to continue its task in Evolution. This mind is unfettered for it realizes that the task is not to grasp a single situation or relationship, but rather *all* relationships. Yet the heart is also subdued, *because its strength needs to forever be husbanded* to allow *full* compassion and *full* comprehension.

In closing this discussion of provocative passages in the *Gita,* it is well to suggest that in between and beneath the lines of the colloquy may be discerned the Secret Doctrine. Thus Krishna says to Arjuna, "Thou must never reveal this to one who doth not practice mortification, who is without devotion, who careth not to hear it." Therefore, these teachings often come in a *suggestive* manner. Given as revelation, they partake of the typical qualities of the purely religious presentation. Religions represent something of *sattva,* while giving a measure of sustenance to those who are not presently able to resist the domination of *tamasic* or *rajasic* instincts. But religions, as such, throw no light on the mysterious path of that soul who "among thousands of mortals" alone "strives for perfection."

The Duty of Arjunas

Equalmindedness and skill in the right performance of duty are the true rules—this is yoga. This right performance of duty means the mental state, for the mere performance of an act has no moral quality in it, since even a machine may be made to perform acts usually done by men. The moral quality resides in the person inside and in his presence or absence. If a human body, asleep or devoid of a soul, raised its hand and took the life of another, that would not be a crime. And oppositely the performance of a good act is no virtue unless the person within is in the right attitude of mind. Many an apparently good act is done from selfish, hypocritical, crafty or other wrong motives. These are only outwardly good. So we must attain to a proper state of mind, or mental devotion, in order to know how to skilfully perform our actions without doing so for the sake of the result; doing them because they ought to be done, because they are our duties. —William Q. Judge

ON THE LOOKOUT

"Sitting" Up and Taking Notice

Phyllis Church, a 17-year-old girl with 6 years' experience in baby-sitting, recounts some of her "lessons learned" in "If I Were a Parent" (*American Magazine* for June). As Miss Church remarks, "I'm learning a great deal about what to do, and what *not* to do, if and when I, myself, become a parent. In some ways the experience is probably more valuable for my purpose than a college education." Miss Church has worked as a sitter in more than a hundred homes; and it might be hoped that others among the millions of teen-age sitters throughout the country have had or will develop the common sense, percipience, and maturity of outlook which Miss Church evinces. Quite possibly, such an attitude is easy to adopt in regard to other people's children, where there is no "self-identifying attachment" to blind the person to the principles involved, but in the absence of large families and with present-day households demonstrating the law of dispersion oftener than that of cohesion, such experiences as Miss Church has accumulated are too rarely met with by prospective parents. Miss Church observes:

> If nothing else, I've learned that raising a well-rounded, unspoiled youngster is a very, very tricky business, full of pitfalls. In fact, it is so tricky that it sometimes scares me. . . . The income or amount of schooling the parents have seems to have little bearing on success. One of the most wonderful fathers I've seen was a telephone lineman who had never finished 11th grade. His children (4) were bright, full of the devil, and yet beautifully mannered and self-reliant. They were a joy to sit with.

"Following Through"

Miss Church has listed some of the things which seem to her most important—"important enough so that I hope I can keep them in mind if and when I become a parent."

> For one thing, I've been deeply impressed with the importance of *following through* on what you say to a child. I mention this first because it is where discipline and respect for parents seem to break down most often in homes where I've been. . . .
>
> In one home I heard the mother warn her son: "If you don't take a nap you won't get any ice cream when the ice-cream man comes."

He didn't nap—and he did get his ice cream, by howling until he got it.

A variation is the parent who makes rules galore and doesn't enforce them. I heard a mother announce with a great flourish to her children one night: "All right, from now on you must all be in bed by 7:30!" Two nights later I reported to work at 8. The children were racing about the house, still fully dressed. Mother was chatting with a neighbor on the phone.

In homes where children seem to respect their parents the most, I've noticed that the parents either don't issue threats and orders, or else are careful to follow through when they do.

"Double Standard"

Another common tendency which Miss Church has marked as one to be at all costs avoided, "when and if," is the habit which parents have of expecting their children to abide by a set of rules which they do not themselves observe. This can apply to the most important moral standards, or to habits of neatness and dependability. Some parents, for example, steal away without their children's knowledge (which would warrant the "woodshed" treatment if the children attempted it) on the grounds that they wish to "avoid a scene"—actually it only postpones the scene so that the baby-sitter has to handle it alone when the parents' absence is discovered. Miss Church gives another illustration:

I was present when a little girl happened to catch her parents tiptoeing out the kitchen door. She asked where they were going. The mother blurted, "Oh we're going to the store to buy you some cookies. We'll be back in a little while." They came back four hours later and had forgotten all about the cookies. But the girl hadn't. She had lain awake waiting for them.

I am confident that if the girl had told her parents the same sort of fib they told her, she would have had her mouth washed out with soap.

The Path—Shown or Followed?

The common theory to explain such inconsistencies is that parents, being too old to change bad habits, at least can strive to inculcate good ones in their children. Yet this self-belittling view is fallacious in logic and ineffective in practice, for children, like adults, instinctively pay more attention to behavior than to words.

Much better, perhaps, for the parent to fall down in *his* application of principle—if he is sincerely attempting to follow it—than not to try to live up to a high ideal. H.P.B., in saying, "Follow not me or my path, but *the path that I show,*" gave a direction all theosophists may use. Her statement, we can understand, was not an attempt to evade her own responsibility to follow the right path, but was simply to elaborate the principle that each man must plot his own course to the common end, using his self-reliance and whatever power of judgment he himself has developed to guide his action. The sign-manual of real adulthood, we may say, is the ability to perceive a true idea apart from its application by this or that person—child or grownup—and the feeling that one is never too old nor too settled in past habits to undertake a new discipline of thought, will, and feeling.

"NOT A THING TO PLAY WITH"

Having recited at length a first-hand account of the evils of too much television, Miss Church remarks:

> Television is not the only thing children can get too much of. Another is playthings. . . . I can't help feeling something is very wrong when I go into a child's room and find the floor covered knee-deep with trucks, soldiers, airplanes, wind-up toys, Ferris wheels, building blocks, chemical sets, rocking horses, balloons, six-shooters, sub-machine guns, etc.
>
> In such rooms I've seen children wander about with a confused look and complain to me that they don't have a *thing* to play with. When youngsters have too much for their childish minds to cope with, everything seems to become cheapened to them. I've seen boys step on their fire trucks accidentally and smash a wheel. They would move on without even giving the accident a thought, because they knew they could always get their mother to buy them something else.
>
> Children who have too many possessions for their own good also seem to develop a low regard for other people's possessions.

Thoughts such as the above have been expressed by many who have studied children and their ways—and their parents—but it is heartening indeed to find them, self-devised, so to speak, from her own experience, by a 17-year-old girl. If she, and other girls as thoughtful as herself, succeed in putting these principles to work in later years, they and their children will indeed be "sitting pretty."

"Brief Siege"

"Brief Siege," in *Good Housekeeping* (April), intimates some "occult" aspects of child-bearing, the author, Frances Keene, suggesting that the last six weeks of preparturition bring quite unique experiences:

> You are deep in an experience that occurs only during the brief siege. You sleep little, so you have time to think—quiet time, when no one else is awake to share your thoughts. Sleep in itself has acquired a new quality. If you have ever endured a spell of sleeplessness, you know how terrifying the thought of a recurrence is as you go to bed at night. Yet the lack of sleep during preparturition has none of the terrors of insomnia. You lie absorbed in waiting, and the waiting for sleep is only a foretaste of the lying in wait for birth.

In the hectic days of modern living, there is little opportunity or encouragement for such "quiet times," though great thinkers and mystics have without exception given credit to their hours of contemplation and meditation for the depth and power of mind which they were able to develop. Emphasis is rarely given to the important part such contemplative thought can and should play in every man's life, as a self-conscious furthering of his evolution, an evaluating of his aims and errors, and a time of inner strength in which to form and strengthen his higher resolves.

"That Heaven-Sent Sense"

Something of this detachment from the trivia which normally absorb our attention is the fortune of those who thoughtfully undergo the "brief siege":

> Perspective changes as one nears the inevitable hour when the creature divests itself of you—not vice versa, mind you—and achieves existence on his or her own. The irrelevancies that reduce our days to nothingness matter less and less. If one could only keep this detachment, you mutter, this truly heaven-sent sense of first things first. . . . Consuming as the physical problems of child raising can be, they are still ahead of you; so cling to the divine detachment of the siege to plot a spiritual atmosphere in which your child can grow. Make the long-range kind of resolution; this is your last chance to consider objectively how you would like to behave in the future.
>
> Calm and order, almost as essential for children as air and food and light, cannot come from a disordered being. Face the fact

> that you yourself will set the emotional environment of your child's life. This responsibility should goad you to a first resolution: to maintain your own pace, not to bustle, overstrain, or get tense with worry. . . .
>
> Calm, continuity, and an awareness that people exist outside himself and his demands are three basic gifts you can give your body from his earliest days. Now is the time, before his severance from you and while you are objectively conscious of their full importance, for you to determine that he shall have these qualities.

"ULTRAPERCEPTIVE EXPERIENCES"

The "brief siege"—or any other period of strong self-search or calm attained—cannot actually be a "last chance," for as long as the mind is active, and the aspiration true, even the most trying and time-consuming days can be turned into valuable lessons in detachment. Yet some such discipline as that set forth above is as necessary to the soul of man as breath is to his body, and happy the one who establishes a time each day for special attention to this inner need. Frances Keene finds that during the before-birth period, "you see sights and hear sounds that few men and women see and hear." From this she surmises, "If we can have a life of the mind outside the besieged, imprisoning body, it must now consist of these ultraperceptive sensory experiences, for which, in other moments, the mind is allowed no time. It evaluates with a truer sense what is and what is not relevant to the day." Yet this experience may be at once more universal and more accessible than she suggests. The *practice* of detachment develops discrimination, just as taking time to think, weigh, and consider helps make purposefulness a maintained attitude of mind.

"AWAKENING TO THE SELF"

While there is always "time to think," the first step is to give ourselves a *thinking time.* An article printed by Mr. Judge, "The Awakening to the Self," contains some seeds for nurturing by active contemplation:

> This awakening to the Self is recorded for those whose inner darkness has been worn away by strong effort, who have reached restfulness, from whom passion has departed, who seek perfect Freedom. . . .

All outward things, the vestures and the rest, spring from unwisdom; they are fugitive as bubbles. One must find the changeless, spotless "I am the Eternal."

As I am other than these vestures, not mine are their birth, weariness, suffering, dissolution. I am not bound by sensuous objects, for Self is separate from the powers of sense.

As I am other than mind, not mine are pain, rage, hate and fear. The Self is above the outward life and mind, according to the words of wisdom. . . .

The ever-pure lonely one, the partless bliss, the secondless truth, wisdom, endless, the Supreme Eternal; this am I.

Thus the steadily-held remembrance that "I am the Eternal" takes away all unwisdom, as the healing essence stills all pain. . . .

He who, drawing away from space and time, faithfully worships in the holy place of the divine Self,—the ever-present, the destroyer of heat and cold, and every limit, the stainless, eternally happy,—he all-knowing, entering the All, becomes immortal. (THEOSOPHY 6: 460.)

MASTER-WORKMAN IN FILMS

The death of Robert Flaherty, last July, brought out numerous notices about one who, at 67, was a *continuing* pioneer in motion picture development. Readers may recall mention of Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* (Lookout, November, 1948)—a documentary film which, for drama and humanity, far surpasses most "major" films. But for those who have never seen a Flaherty picture—and for those who have—the following tribute by Paul Rotha (from the *Manchester Guardian Weekly,* Aug. 2) will introduce a "minority view" of the film industry, and afford a glimpse of what movies might become in the hands of imaginative humanitarians with dramatic insight and "picture" vision.

Few exponents of the young art of the film can fairly be called masters, but among them is Flaherty. With Griffith, Eisenstein, Murnau, and Carl Mayer, he was one of the fine craftsmen who gave the major part of his working life to using the film medium to express life. Never a part of the industrialised shape of the motion picture, he fought always to find means to be true to his medium and true to the kinds of living which he sought to interpret. His warm, generous and sensitive approach to people—islanders in the South Seas or workmen in Birmingham—suffused all his films. In thirty years he made only half a dozen films which can be wholly

called his own and a few others in collaboration with other talents. In spite of this small output his influence over filmmakers in all parts of the world is shared only by that of Eisenstein, Pabst, and Chaplin. . . .

THE FLAHERTY THEME

The simple fundamental theory that a story, or theme, can arise only from its environment, ignored by the great mass of film directors working at the assembly belt, was practised in every Flaherty film. He observed slowly and patiently at first hand and then bent his camera to interpret with love and honesty. To his eyes movement was the basis of cinematography. Seldom did anger enter his mood, except when he found to what depths of degradation man was dragged by idleness in perhaps his most profound film, "The Land," in 1940. Now that he is no longer with us, the United States authorities may remove their ban on this super film if only to permit it private screenings.

Like all great craftsmen, Flaherty worked with a minimum of apparatus and the bare handful of collaborators needed by the medium. Not for him was the elaborate profusion of the studio. Often his own cameraman, notably in the early days of "Nanook" and "Moana," he used his camera and celluloid as a painter his brush and a sculptor his clay. For that reason alone his films live to-day as vitally as when they were shot. Nearly thirty years after it was made, "Nanook" was billed in Piccadilly Circus in neon letters twelve feet tall. What other master of filmcraft has achieved that feat save Chaplin? He was quick to recognise skill in others, over-eager to praise and to give, always anxious to encourage younger people, but ever reluctant to receive praise himself. His integrity of purpose, his blank refusal to compromise commercially, his deep understanding and respect for his medium—these qualities, so rare in cinema, have been admired by film-makers and film-goers for too many years to be rubbed lightly from the record.

When a true concept of individuality emerges in the fields of art—replacing the endless and shoddy substitutes purveyed by so-called "individuals" self-glamored by conceit, ineptitude, strident personal claims and blatant vulgarity—the simple fundamentals observed by Robert Flaherty (such as, for example, are also to be found in sculptor Robert Henri's modest volume, *The Art Spirit*) will enable the creation and production of a "motion picture literature" containing many more classics like the Flaherty films.

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The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

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